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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002523

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/I AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: IRAQ NEIGHBORS MINISTERIAL PLANNING UPDATE

REF: ANKARA 2460

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkish MFA Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol met October 11 with the Ambassador to provide an update on planning for the Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul, November 2-3. The MFA is finishing the draft statement and will provide it to us on or about October 15. Celikkol provided a draft schedule for the Ministerial and reported the UNSYG will not attend due to a scheduling conflict. He appealed for help in changing the decision. The MFA remains interested in some kind of role in Istanbul for President Talibani. Regarding overall assistance to Iraq, Celikkol said Turkey stands ready to train 1,000 senior Iraqi police officers as soon as the GOI provides the names and requested courses. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met October 11 with MFA Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol to discuss plans for the upcoming Iraq Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul, November 2-3. Celikkol reported the MFA is finalizing the draft statement, in line with his conversations with the Department during his recent visit. We can expect a draft on or about October 15. After receiving U.S. input, MFA plans to circulate the text to the 22 delegations for comment no later than the week of October 22.

¶3. (C) Turkish PM Erdogan, President Gul, and FM Babacan will represent the GOT at the Ministerial. Celikkol said the Office of the UNSYG notified Turkey's UN Mission that the UNSYG will not attend the Ministerial, apparently due to a scheduling conflict; UN Under Secretary for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe will participate in his stead. For the GOT, Ban's participation is essential to legitimizing the Ministerial and the UN's role in Iraq. However, some nations continue to object to the UNSYG's proposed support mechanism to facilitate the Neighbors process.

¶4. (C) Celikkol emphasized the importance of Iraqi President Talibani's involvement at the Ministerial, despite political sensitivities. Talibani need not be a member of the delegation, but could use the Ministerial as an excuse to establish contact with Gul. If Gul hosts a luncheon for

Ministerial participants November 3, Talabani could attend as his counterpart. Celikkol said Turkey cannot invite the Iraqi president without irritating PM Malaki and sought advice on host to prompt a decision by the President that he should attend. Ambassador reviewed Embassy Baghdad's concerns about having Talabani attend, but undertook to relay Celikkol's thoughts.

15. (C) On other Iraq-related issues, Celikkol reported the MFA plans to send an advance team to Basra after the Ramadan holidays to scout locations for their new consulate. The team is currently in London to discuss their new facility and the possibility of creating an economic zone in Basra. As part of the USD 50 million in assistance previously pledged to support Iraqi reconstruction, Celikkol noted the GOT had agreed to train 1,000 high-level Iraqi police officers. The GOT is prepared to begin training, but continues to wait for the GOI to provide names and course requests. Aside from the offer of police training, the GOT has supported school, judicial, and hospital projects in Mosul.

16. (C) The MFA plans to hold the Ministerial at the Ciragan Palace. The draft schedule is as follows:

November 2	2230	Working Dinner (principal 2)
November 3	1000	Group Photo
	1005	Working Session (principal 6)
	1400	Break
	1430	Official Luncheon hosted by President Gul (participants TBD)

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1530	Closing Session (principal 6)
1700	Press Conference (Babacan and Zebari)

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